

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 21. Please cancel claims 6, 22 and 23 without prejudice. Please add new claims 26-29. Pending claims 1-5, 7-21, 24 and 29 follow:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing meat products comprising:

providing a first member comprising a first surface defining a concavity and comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from said first surface and arranged in a first pattern;

providing a second member comprising a second surface defining a concavity comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from said second surface and arranged in a second pattern;

providing a meat product;

closing the first and second members thereby sandwiching the meat product between the first and second surfaces and impressing the first and second patterns on the meat product;

heating the two members, thereby heating the meat product between within the two members and for cooking the impressed patterns on the meat product;

opening the two members;

removing the impressed meat product from the two members; and

cooking the meat product to a desired state.

2. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising packaging the meat product in a film prior to sandwiching the meat product between the two members, wherein sandwiching further comprises sandwiching the packaged meat product between the two members impressing the first and second patterns on the meat product, and wherein heating comprises heating the packaged meat product within the two members for cooking the impressed patterns onto on the packaged meat product.

3. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the first and second patterns are the same.

4. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises immersing the two members with meat product in hot water.

5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises electrically heating the two members.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein heating comprises applying steam to the two members.

8. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising pivotally coupling the first member to the second member.

9. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein sandwiching comprises applying hydraulic pressure on one of said first and second members.

10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein providing a first member comprises providing a member having a plurality of longitudinal protrusions and a plurality of lateral parallel protrusions.

11. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising:
positioning a conveyor having a belt over a container containing hot water; and
coupling the two members on the conveyor belt, wherein cooking the meat product
~~within the two members~~ comprises rotating the conveyor belt to submerge the members into the hot water.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 11 further comprising:

providing a third member coupled to the conveyor belt comprising a third surface defining a concavity and comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from the third surface and arranged in a third pattern;

providing a fourth member coupled to the conveyor belt comprising a fourth surface defining a concavity and comprising a plurality of protrusions extending from the fourth surface and arranged in a fourth pattern;

rotating the conveyor belt placing the third and fourth members over the water in the container;

packaging a second meat product in a film;

placing the second packaged meat product between the third and fourth surfaces;

closing the third and fourth members, thereby sandwiching the second packaged meat product between the third and fourth surfaces and impressing the third and fourth patterns on the second packaged meat product; and

rotating the conveyor belt placing the third and fourth members in the hot water for cooking the impressed third and fourth patterns on the second packaged meat product.

13. (Original) A method as recited in claim 12 wherein when the first and second members are not in the hot water, the third and fourth members are submerged in the hot water.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for processing meat products comprising:

providing a first member having a plurality of first depressions each first depression comprising a plurality of protrusions;

providing a second member having a plurality of second depressions corresponding to the plurality of first depressions, each of the second depressions comprising a plurality of protrusions;

placing meat products in each of said plurality of first depressions;

closing the aligned first and second members, thereby sandwiching the first and second members, impressing the protrusions of a first and second depression on each of said meat products and forming impressions on the outer surfaces of the meat products;

heating the first and second members, thereby heating the meat products within between the two members for cooking the impressions on the meat products; and

opening the two members; and

removing the meat products from the two members.

15. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising cooking the meat products to a desired state.

16. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising packaging the meat products in a film prior to sandwiching the meat product between the two members, wherein sandwiching comprises sandwiching the packaged meat products between the two members impressing the protrusions of the first and the second depression on said meat products forming impressions on the outer surfaces of the meat products, and wherein cooking comprises cooking the packaged meat products within the two members for cooking the impressions on the packaged meat products.

17. (Original) A method as recited in claim 16 further comprising cooking the packaged meat products to a desired state.

18. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein sandwiching comprises applying hydraulic pressure on one of said first and second members against the other of said first and second members.

19. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein each of the first depressions and second depressions comprise a plurality of longitudinal protrusions and a plurality of lateral parallel protrusions.

20. (Original) A method as recited in claim 14 wherein heating comprises electrically heating the first and second depressions.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a meat product comprising:
packaging the meat product;
providing an impression on the packaged meat product outer surface while packaged
by sandwiching the packaged meat product in a compartment of an impression device having
protrusions that impress into the packaged meat product outer surface;
heating the impression device, thereby heating the packaged meat product and
cooking to cook the impression onto on the meat product outer surface; and
cooking the meat product to a desired state.

22. (Canceled).

23. (Canceled).

24. (Original) A method as recited in claim 21 further comprising removing the packaged meat product from the device after heating and before cooking.

25. (Original) A method as recited in claim 24 further comprising providing a cooking device separate from the impression device for cooking the meat product to a desired state.

26. (New) The method of claim 1, the first and second members comprising shell members.

27. (New) The method of claim 12, the third and fourth members comprising shell members.

28. (New) The method of claim 14, the first and second members comprising shell members.

29. (New) The method of claim 21, the first and second members comprising shell members.